



Communicating after an Emergency

Preparing for the aftermath of an emergency is just as important as planning for your immediate emergency response. Our education team share their learnings from years of supporting schools navigating the aftermath of lockdowns, floods, tornados, tsunamis, COVID19 outbreaks, and more.

How to use your emergency text messaging platform in the days following an emergency

"An organisation needs to have simple and accessible systems in place to facilitate an immediate response to a crisis, and to provide longer term support, both on a personal, as well as an operational level."

Graham Dockrill, Citrus Tree

Consultants and business owner during the Christchurch earthquake.

The personal

Our School-links education team have supported schools through [lockdowns](#), [earthquakes](#), [floods](#), [power outages](#) and [COVID19](#) outbreaks and have identified patterns of good practice:

Establish who will assume or share the communications role post-emergency.

This person will be responsible for sharing critical information in the days following the emergency. They can text a notification to let staff know to check their emails or your company Facebook page for updates from civil defence, the council etc. Communication via an employer, like a school, has weight attached to it. In our experience, [schools who have used this approach](#) have quickly found that their Facebook page has become the 'go to' for the community and provided significant reassurance.

Consider having an online survey set up and ready to go in the event of an emergency.

You can easily send the link out to staff via text and email and establish who needs support, be it emotional, physical or financial. Or it can be a simple check-in "Do you need immediate support? Reply Y or N."

Once your leadership team are operational have them send a text and email that allows staff to set up a phone call or online meeting with their own team leader, to reassure and bring a sense of normality to what may be an unsettling time.

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"I guess we did a low-tech version of the Zoom and Teams meetings that businesses are relying on through COVID-19. People would meet in small groups at one staff member's house and we would conference call in to support them."

"On the one hand we needed to check in on staff welfare and support them as they struggled with the damage to their homes and the impact on their families. On the other side, we needed to manage operations and ensure business continuity."

Graham Dockrill

The operational

Send regular texts to update staff on when and how the business will re-open and when they will return to work. Nothing is more unnerving than an information void. Let them know that things are underway. Stay connected and involve them in the organisation's recovery, invite them to meetings, and encourage them to make suggestions.

Don't forget your clients. They will appreciate updates too but establish clear protocols. In your emergency planning take into consideration data security and keeping track of communications. Ensure that your staff use 'company-sanctioned' communication platforms to stay in touch with clients. Avoid them using Facebook Messenger and What's App. They may begin using as a chat service to check in on each other, but this can quickly become a slippery slope to sending company documents via that medium.

Connection is critical in a crisis, both in terms of health and safety, but also well-being. Having a plan to stay in touch can make all the difference to your employees as they navigate the aftermath of a significant hazard.